

John Hagee: 'If You're Not for Israel, You're Biblically Ignorant or Not Christian'

One picture captured my heart this past Sunday. The sight of Pastor John Hagee, the leader of tens of millions of evangelicals in the United States and around the world, and Rabbi Aryeh Scheinberg, a great scholar and veteran rabbi of the Orthodox community in San Antonio, embracing during a joint prayer at the Western Wall.

This picture joins the mounting evidence of a theological earthquake occurring in parts of the Christian world pertaining to relations with the Jewish people and the state of Israel. While some of us have difficulty opening up to these changes, considering the bloody historic record of the Jewish people with the church, it is important to know of this revolution and the righteous among the nations who come to our assistance.

In 2006, Hagee established Christians United for Israel (CUFI), a growing organization that currently numbers 1.8 million members. The group's activists regularly approach their representatives in the U.S. government in Washington on behalf of Israel. The organization has branches on many college campuses in the fight for the hearts of the next generation and starting this year will launch a program bringing Christian student missions to Israel to become directly acquainted with it.

CUFI convenes a huge annual conference in Washington and throughout the year holds dinners honoring Israel in every major city. Hagee emphasizes that they condition admission to the organization and its meetings with the stipulation that "they are not to be conversionary in any way, but are to

communicate to our Jewish brothers and sisters our love for them and our desire to help them in any way that we can.”

IH: What brings you to Israel at this time?

Hagee: “We have arrived in Israel with a delegation of more than 500 people because we consider Israel’s struggle also our struggle. We believe Israel has the right to exist, and the right to secure borders. It has the right to defend itself against its enemies, and its friends need to stand up and speak up for it at a time of adversity. Many people have canceled their trips to Israel due to the situation. In contrast, we chose this time to come because we want the people of Israel know that we are more than talk. We are action.”

IH: Israel has to deal with pro-Palestinian propaganda and lies. How do you see this?

H: “Well, I can say that Israel is winning the media war in the United States hands down. Our organization (CUFI) put full-page ads in 14 of the top-circulation newspapers in the United States. These stated that Israel’s fight is our fight. We pointed out what Hamas was trying to accomplish. We demonstrated the fact that Hamas terrorists were aiming for casualties among their own civilians to win the media war by presenting Israel in a negative light. The American people were flooded with the truth, and we were glad to be a part of this effort.”

IH: Let’s talk about religion and faith. The average Israeli is not familiar with the differences between the Christian denominations. Tell us about the American evangelicals.

H: “There are about 60 million evangelicals in America. The thing that separates the evangelicals from other belief systems in the United States is that we believe in the Bible. It is the moral compass for the soul. The Bible does not offer God’s recommendations; these are God’s laws and we keep them,

beginning with 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' (Gen. 1:1). King David said: 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof' (Ps. 24:1).

"If God owns the earth, and made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give their descendants the right to the land of Israel—then Israel is not an 'occupier' as implied by the liberal media in the United States, but the owner of the land by covenant. And the covenant still stands.

"Israel must never be separated from its biblical roots. When King David says, 'Speak and pray for the peace of Jerusalem' (Ps. 122:6)—we speak and pray for the peace of Jerusalem. When the Prophet Isaiah (62:1) says, 'For Zion's sake I will not keep silent'—we do not keep silent.

"Our organization has 1.8 million members, making us the largest pro-Israel organization in the world. When we send out an 'action alert,' our members promptly send out tens of thousands of emails in support and defense of Israel. We do this due to the biblical commandment. We believe that not to speak is to speak; seeing evil and not resisting it is evil. Therefore when we see evil—and anti-Semitism is evil, a sin that damns the soul—we react.

"In the teachings of Paul in the book of Romans (15:27), which state that the Christians should recognize that they have a debt of gratitude to the Jewish people for their contribution to Christianity, Christians should know that without the Jewish contribution there would be no Christianity.

"Judaism does not need Christianity to explain its existence, while Christianity cannot explain its existence without Judaism. So what did the Jewish people give to Christianity? The Bible, the Torah, which is the most priceless treasure we have. They have given us the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They have given unto us the knowledge that 'the Lord is our God; the Lord is one,' (Deut. 6:4) invalidating pantheism

and all polytheistic religions.

"Judaism has given Christianity the first family of Christianity: Mary, Joseph and Jesus, as well as the 12 Disciples. Jesus says in the book of John (4:22): 'Salvation is of the Jews.' Meaning that if you take away the Jewish contribution to Christianity, Christianity would not exist.

"Now, people who believe the Bible believe in this too, and therefore their support for Israel is not a political issue, but rather a matter of obedience to the Word of God."

IH: So how come the majority of the Christian world does not support us?

H: "If you really want to read a masterful exposition on the subject, read the book by Father Flannery, 'The Anguish of the Jews.' He goes into the historic essence of the evolution of the Roman Catholic Church in becoming anti-Semitic.

"For 800 years, the church had an anti-Semitic message that produced the Crusades, and brought to the murder of thousands of Jews for refusing to convert to Catholicism, as well as those killed by the Spanish Inquisition.

"And then Adolf Hitler, who attended a Roman Catholic church and listened to the teachings of John Chrysostom (bishop of Antioch from the end of the 4th century), 'the Golden Mouth,' who said: God hates the Jews and I hate the Jews and I want to kill them because of Christ. ['For killing God there is no expiation possible, no indulgence or pardon. ...

When animals are unfit for work, they are marked for slaughter, and this is the very thing which the Jews have experienced. By making themselves unfit for work, they have become ready for slaughter.' (D.E.)]

"When such a message enters the brain of the child who later became the monster who led the Third Reich which

systematically murdered 6 million Jews—this is what I call ‘the harvest of hatred’ of 1,800 years of a theological concept according to which God had no use for the Jews. Yet, I acknowledge that there have been, in the past and present, Catholics who have been very good friends of Israel, like Pope John Paul II.”

IH: What response did you get from Christians of other denominations about your vision and religious viewpoint?

H: “You have to go back to basics, with the fact that in Genesis (chapter 1), God created the world and made a very solemn promise (brought in Gen. 12:3), ‘I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you.’ From that moment on, every nation that ever blessed Israel has been blessed by God. And every nation that has ever persecuted the Jewish people, God crushed. And so He will continue.

“So take that principle and apply it to the people who call themselves Christians. There are Christians who claim to be anti-Semitic. That is an oxymoron. Christianity is driven by a love. Anti-Semitism is driven by hate. You cannot be a Christian anti-Semite; You are either a Christian or an anti-Semite. Bottom line, if you are not for Israel and the Jewish people, you either are biblically ignorant or you’re not a Christian.”

IH: Part of the Christian world reads the word ‘Israel’ in the Old Testament as referring to the church.

H: “I know, but saying it doesn’t make it true. You are talking about replacement theology [which maintains that God abandoned the Jews and replaced them with the church following their rejection of Jesus. Since, the Jews have only been ‘Israel according to the flesh,’ namely, the biological descendants of the biblical people of Israel, while the church is ‘Israel according to the spirit,’ the heir of all the prophetic promises given to the people of Israel in the Bible

(D.E.)) This is a false doctrine!”

IH: Was it not also Paul’s view?

“Absolutely not. In Romans (chapter 11), Paul opens by saying: Has God cast away his people?—speaking about the Jewish people. And he responds: God forbid! And then he used the logic—‘I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin; God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.’

“Therefore, Paul concludes, if God is using him then he is still using the Jewish people and they were not cast off. He repeats this idea further down in this chapter, just for those who have a hard time getting it the first time round.

“And then you learn the concept that anything that is replaced in the Bible never reappears, Sodom and Gomorrah, for instance. The people of Israel, in contrast, were dispersed from their land in the year 70 A.D. But they were reborn and the State of Israel was re-established in 1948. Why would they be reborn if God wanted to replace them? Furthermore, not only were they reborn, but they flourished. This nation has one of the most prosperous countries on the face of this Earth. It is militarily strong. It has transformed the desert into a blossoming place. This is a testimonial to the fact that God is with Israel. Therefore replacement theology is a false doctrine. It is religious anti-Semitism, and can only be believed by people who do not read the entirety of the biblical texts concerning Israel.”

IH: We are now facing a revival of ancient Islam that is sweeping major parts of the Middle East. How do you respond to this?

H: “I think it was Edmond Burke who said, ‘The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.’ I think America has backed down from its role as a global leader. We have a weak national leadership, and on

account of that weakness, the tyrants of the world are marshalling all the people; the radicals are bent on realizing their evil intent, and evil is prospering. This is the heyday for evil.

“ISIS [Islamic State], which was dismissed by our president as the ‘Lakers Junior Varsity,’ now has, according to our latest Intelligence, over 31,000 soldiers, fully equipped and ready for action. In less than 10 months they went from nothing to a major military force. And why? Because those who should represent truth and light are backing down, and evil is having a field day. I see no difference in principle between ISIS, Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, apart from the degree of violence they resort to. They all want the Jews dead.”

IH: We know that the people who are suffering directly from ISIS are Shi'ites and Christians. Christians have become the Jews of the days of old.

H: “Yes, ISIS is a very radical form of Islam that kills anybody that doesn't share its beliefs, whether Christian, Jewish or anything but what they are. Yet, any faith that has as its fundamental reason for existence the killing of innocent children solely for not sharing their belief certainly cannot be following the God of heaven.”

IH: Some say that the evangelical support for Israel is to hasten the prophetic scenario of the End of Days; that your support is not for good reasons but stems from the desire to have Israel engaged in a new world war that will hasten the Second Coming of Jesus.

H: “The answer to that is that it is absolutely impossible for any human being or group of people to do anything to change the mind of God about the things He is going to do in the future.

“The Bible is very clear on this that from the foundation of the world, God has established what He is going to do and

when. I will be judged by how I am going to obey the Bible to help the Jewish people.

“If some people are too biblically illiterate to understand this, it is not my problem. If some are too prejudiced to accept it—so be it. My response is to do what I know: to help Israel and the Jewish people. This will not change one thing God Almighty is going to do, not now, not ever.”

IH: Finally, on the eve of the Jewish New Year, what would you like to wish the people of Israel?

H: “Our prayer and our blessing for the state of Israel is that they have a lasting peace, when they can enjoy the fruit and benefits of living in this democratic country; and that their children and their children’s children will no longer be under constant threat of war from radical groups, but will prosper and be blessed.”

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